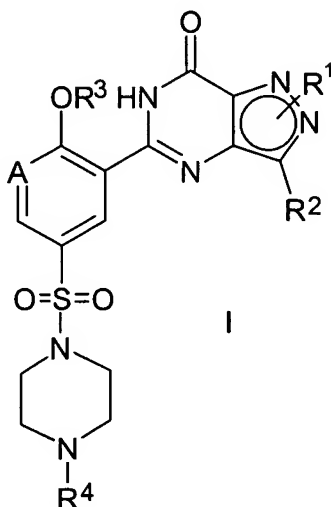


IN THE CLAIMS

1-16 (Canceled)

17. (Currently amended) A process for the production of a compound of general formula I:



wherein

A represents CH or N;

R¹ represents H, lower alkyl (which alkyl group is optionally interrupted by O), Het, alkylHet, aryl or alkylaryl, which latter five groups are all optionally substituted (and/or, in the case of lower alkyl, optionally terminated) by one or more substituents selected from halo, cyano, nitro, lower alkyl, OR⁵, C(O)R⁶, C(O)OR⁷, C(O)NR⁸R⁹, NR^{10a}R^{10b} and SO₂NR^{11a}R^{11b};

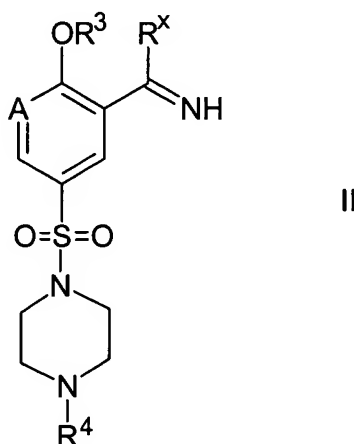
R² and R⁴ independently represent lower alkyl;

R³ represents lower alkyl, which alkyl group is optionally interrupted by oxygen;

Het represents an optionally substituted four- to twelve-membered heterocyclic group, which group contains one or more heteroatoms selected from nitrogen, oxygen and sulfur;

R⁵, R⁶, R⁷, R⁸, R⁹, R^{11a} and R^{11b} independently represent H or lower alkyl;

R^{10a} and R^{10b} either independently represent, H or lower alkyl or, together with the nitrogen atom to which they are attached, represent azetidiny, pyrrolidiny or piperidiny,
which process comprises the reaction of a compound of formula II,



wherein

R^x is a group, substitutable by an aminopyrazole, selected from:

-OR^e, wherein R^e independently represents the same groups as defined by

R¹:

-NH₂;

-NHR^a, wherein R^a represents -OR¹ or halo;

-N(R^b)R^c, wherein R^b and R^c each independently represent the same groups as defined by R¹;

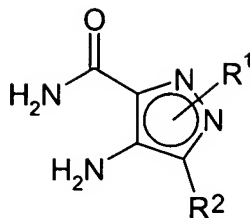
-SH; and

-SR^d; wherein R^d independently represents the same groups as defined by

R¹;

and A, R³ and R⁴ are as defined above,

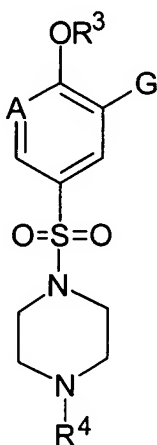
with a compound of ~~general~~ formula III,



III

wherein R^1 and R^2 are as defined above

and wherein the compound of formula II is prepared by way of reaction of a compound of formula IV,



IV

wherein G represents a carboxylic acid group ($-C(O)OH$) or a derivative thereof, with an appropriate reagent for converting the group G to a $-C(R^x)=NH$ group.

18. (Previously presented) A process as claimed in Claim 17, wherein, in the compound of formula IV, the group G represents $-CN$, $-C(OR^e)_3$, $-C(O)NH_2$ or $-C(=NOR^f)NR_2$, wherein R^f represents H or lower alkyl and R^e is lower alkyl (which alkyl group is optionally interrupted by O), Het, alkylHet, aryl or alkylaryl, which latter five groups are all optionally substituted (and/or, in the case of lower alkyl, optionally terminated) by one or more substituents selected from halo, cyano, nitro, lower alkyl, OR^5 , $C(O)R^6$, $C(O)OR^7$, $C(O)NR^8R^9$, $NR^{10a}R^{10b}$ and $SO_2NR^{11a}R^{11b}$.

19. (Previously presented) A process as claimed in Claim 18, wherein, when R^x represents $-OR^e$ (wherein R^e represents lower alkyl (optionally interrupted by O), alkylHet or alkylaryl):

(a) a corresponding compound of formula IV in which G represents -CN is reacted with an alcohol of formula VA,



wherein R^{α} represents lower alkyl (optionally interrupted by O), alkylHet or alkylaryl, and Het is as defined in Claim 17 in the presence of a protic acid;

(b) a corresponding compound of formula IV in which G represents -C(O)NH₂ is reacted with an appropriate alkylating agent of formula VB,



wherein Z^1 represents a leaving group and R^{α} is as defined above; or

(c) a corresponding compound of formula IV in which G represents -C(OR^α)₃, wherein R^{α} is as defined above, is reacted with ammonia, or an *N*-protected derivative thereof.

20. (Previously presented) A process as claimed in Claim 18, wherein, when R^{x} represents -OR^e (wherein R^{e} represents Het or aryl), a corresponding compound of formula IV in which G represents -CN is reacted with a compound of formula VC,



wherein R^{β} represents Het or aryl, and Het is as defined in Claim 17.

21. (original) A process as claimed in Claim 18, wherein, when R^{x} represents -NH₂:

(a) a corresponding compound of formula IV in which G represents -CN is reacted with hydrazine, hydroxylamine or O-lower alkyl hydroxylamine, followed by reduction of the resultant intermediate under standard conditions; or

(b) a corresponding compound of formula IV in which G represents -C(=NOR^f)NR₂, wherein R^{f} is as defined in Claim 18, is reduced under standard conditions.

22. (Previously presented) A process as claimed in Claim 18, wherein, when R^{x} represents -NH₂, -NHR^a or -N(R^b)R^c, a corresponding compound of formula IV in which G represents -CN is reacted with a compound of formula VD,



VD

wherein R^x and R^δ independently represent H or R^a , and R^a is lower alkyl (which alkyl group is optionally interrupted by O), Het, alkylHet, aryl or alkylaryl, which latter five groups are all optionally substituted (and/or, in the case of lower alkyl, optionally terminated) by one or more substituents selected from halo, cyano, nitro, lower alkyl, OR^5 , $\text{C}(\text{O})\text{R}^6$, $\text{C}(\text{O})\text{OR}^7$, $\text{C}(\text{O})\text{NR}^8\text{R}^9$, $\text{NR}^{10a}\text{R}^{10b}$ and $\text{SO}_2\text{NR}^{11a}\text{R}^{11b}$.

23. (original) A process as claimed in Claim 18, wherein, when R^x represents -SH:

- (a) a corresponding compound of formula IV in which G represents -CN is reacted with hydrogen sulfide; or
- (b) a corresponding compound of formula IV in which G represents -C(O)NH₂ is reacted with a reagent that effects oxygen-sulfur exchange.

24. (Previously presented) A process as claimed in Claim 18, wherein, when R^x represents -SR^d, a corresponding compound of formula IV in which G represents -CN is reacted with a compound of formula VE,

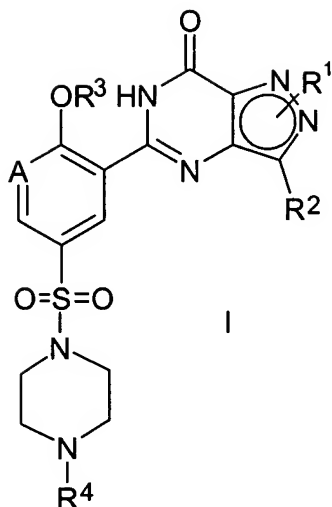


VE

wherein R^d is lower alkyl (which alkyl group is optionally interrupted by O), Het, alkylHet, aryl or alkylaryl, which latter five groups are all optionally substituted (and/or, in the case of lower alkyl, optionally terminated) by one or more substituents selected from halo, cyano, nitro, lower alkyl, OR^5 , $\text{C}(\text{O})\text{R}^6$, $\text{C}(\text{O})\text{OR}^7$, $\text{C}(\text{O})\text{NR}^8\text{R}^9$, $\text{NR}^{10a}\text{R}^{10b}$ and $\text{SO}_2\text{NR}^{11a}\text{R}^{11b}$.

25. (original) A process as claimed in Claim 18, wherein, when R^x represents halo, a corresponding compound of formula IV in which G represents -C(O)NH₂ is reacted with a halogenating agent.

26. (Currently amended) A process for the production of a compound of ~~general~~ formula I:



wherein

A represents CH or N;

R¹ represents H, lower alkyl (which alkyl group is optionally interrupted by O), Het, alkylHet, aryl or alkylaryl, which latter five groups are all optionally substituted (and/or, in the case of lower alkyl, optionally terminated) by one or more substituents selected from halo, cyano, nitro, lower alkyl, OR⁵, C(O)R⁶, C(O)OR⁷, C(O)NR⁸R⁹, NR^{10a}R^{10b} and SO₂NR^{11a}R^{11b};

R² and R⁴ independently represent lower alkyl;

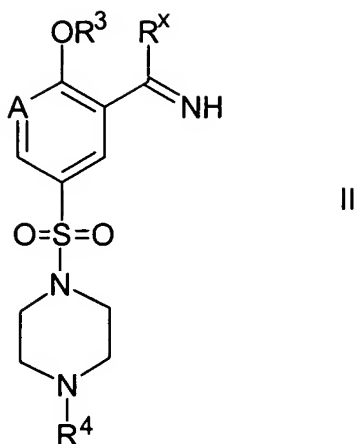
R³ represents lower alkyl, which alkyl group is optionally interrupted by oxygen;

Het represents an optionally substituted four- to twelve-membered heterocyclic group, which group contains one or more heteroatoms selected from nitrogen, oxygen and sulfur;

R⁵, R⁶, R⁷, R⁸, R⁹, R^{11a} and R^{11b} independently represent H or lower alkyl;

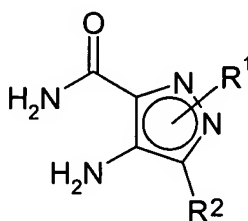
R^{10a} and R^{10b} either independently represent, H or lower alkyl or, together with the nitrogen atom to which they are attached, represent azetidiny, pyrrolidinyl or piperidinyl,

which process comprises the reaction of a compound of formula II,



wherein R^x is a group substitutable by an aminopyrazole and A, R³ and R⁴ are as defined above,

with a compound of general formula III,



wherein R¹ and R² are as defined above

and wherein the compound of formula II is prepared by way of reaction of another compound of formula II with a reagent that will convert one R^x group to another.

27. (Currently amended) A process as claimed in Claim 26, wherein, when R^x represents -OR^e (wherein R^e represents lower alkyl, alkylHet or alkylaryl), a corresponding compound of formula II in which R^x represents Cl is reacted with a compound of formula VA, R^αOH as defined in Claim 19.

28. (Currently amended) A process as claimed in Claim 26, wherein, when R^x represents -NH₂, -NHR^a or -N(R^b)R^c, a corresponding compound of formula II in which R^x represents Cl, -SH, -SR^d or -OR^e, wherein R^d and R^e are lower alkyl

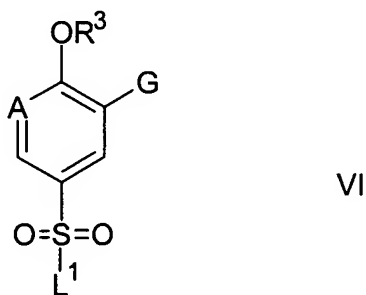
(which alkyl group is optionally interrupted by O), Het, alkylHet, aryl or alkylaryl, which latter five groups are all optionally substituted (and/or, in the case of lower alkyl, optionally terminated) by one or more substituents selected from halo, cyano, nitro, lower alkyl, OR⁵, C(O)R⁶, C(O)OR⁷, C(O)NR⁸R⁹, NR^{10a}R^{10b} and SO₂NR^{11a}R^{11b}, is reacted with an appropriate compound of formula VD, HN(R^x)(R^δ) as defined in Claim 22, or an acid addition salt thereof.

29. (Currently amended) A process as claimed in Claim 26, wherein, when R^x represents -SR^d, a corresponding compound of formula IV in which R^x represents -SH is reacted with a compound of formula VF,

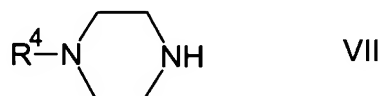


wherein Z² represents a leaving group and R^d is lower alkyl (which alkyl group is optionally interrupted by O), Het, alkylHet, aryl or alkylaryl, which latter five groups are all optionally substituted (and/or, in the case of lower alkyl, optionally terminated) by one or more substituents selected from halo, cyano, nitro, lower alkyl, OR⁵, C(O)R⁶, C(O)OR⁷, C(O)NR⁸R⁹, NR^{10a}R^{10b} and SO₂NR^{11a}R^{11b} as defined in Claim 28.

30. (Previously presented) A process as claimed in Claim 17, wherein the compound of formula IV is prepared by reaction of a compound of formula VI,

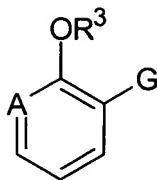


wherein L¹ is a leaving group and A, G and R³ are as defined in Claim 17, with a compound of formula VII,



wherein R⁴ is as defined in Claim 17.

31. (Currently amended) A process as claimed in Claim 30, wherein the compound of formula VI is prepared by reaction of a compound of formula VIII,



VIII

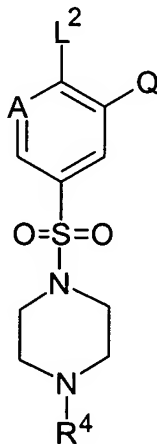
wherein

A represents CH or N,

G represents a carboxylic acid group (-C(O)OH) or a derivative thereof, and

R³ represents lower alkyl, which alkyl group is optionally interrupted by oxygen
~~are as defined in Claim 17,~~ with a reagent that may be used for the introduction of a -
SO₂L¹ group into an aromatic or heteroaromatic ring system.

32. (Previously presented) A process as claimed in Claim 17, wherein the compound of formula IV is one in which G represents -CN or -C(O)NH₂, and is prepared by reaction of a compound of formula IX,



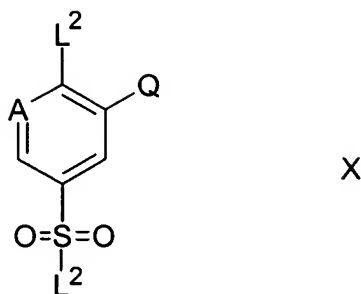
IX

wherein Q represents -CN or -C(O)NH₂ and L² represents a leaving group, with a compound that will provide the group R³O.

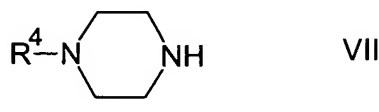
33. (original) A process as claimed in Claim 32, wherein the compound that will provide the group R³O is a lower alkyl alcohol.

34. (Previously presented) A process as claimed in Claim 32, wherein the leaving group L² is chloro.

35. (Currently amended) A process as claimed in Claim 32, wherein the compound of formula IX is prepared by reaction of a compound of formula X,



with a compound of formula VII

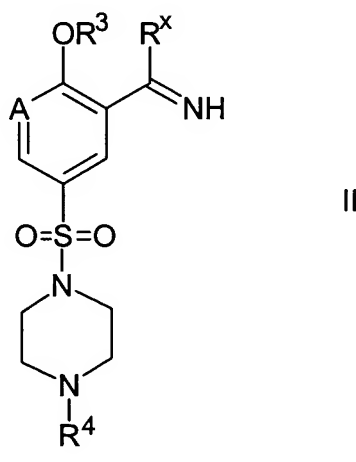


wherein R⁴ is lower alkyl as defined in Claim 30.

36. (Previously presented) A process as claimed in Claim 17, wherein the compound of formula IV is one in which G represents -CN, and is prepared by dehydration of a corresponding compound of formula IV in which G represents -C(O)NH₂.

37. (Previously presented) A process as claimed in Claim 17, wherein the compound of formula IV in which G represents -C(O)NH₂ is prepared from a corresponding compound of formula IV in which G represents -C(O)OH by reaction with ammonia or a derivative thereof.

38. (Currently amended) A compound of formula II,



wherein

Rˣ is a group substitutable by an aminopyrazole.

A is CH or N;

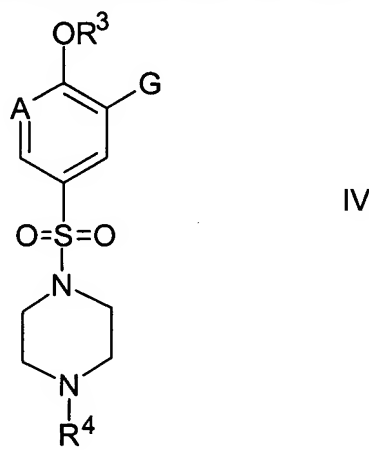
R³ represents lower alkyl, which alkyl group is optionally interrupted by oxygen; and

R⁴ represents lower alkyl as defined in Claim 17.

39. (original) A compound according to Claim 38 wherein A represents –CH, R³ represents Et, R⁴ represents Me and R^x represents NH₂.

40. (original) A compound according to Claim 38 wherein A represents –CH, R³ represents Et, R⁴ represents Et and R^x represents NH₂.

41. (Currently amended) A compound of formula IV,



wherein

G represents a carboxylic acid group (-C(O)OH) or a derivative thereof selected from -CN, -C(OR^e)₃, -C(O)NH₂ or -C(=NOR^f)N(R^e)₂ wherein R^f represents H or lower alkyl and R^e is as defined in Claim 17,

A represents CH or N;

R⁴ represents lower alkyl, with the proviso that when A is CH, G is (-C(O)OH) and R³ is ethyl, R⁴ cannot be methyl;

R³ represents lower alkyl, which alkyl group is optionally interrupted by oxygen, with the proviso that when A is N, G is (-C(O)OH) and R⁴ is ethyl, R³ cannot be – ethylethoxy.

as defined in Claim 17.

42. (Cancel)

43. (Previously presented) A compound according to Claim 41 wherein A represents N, R³ represents Et, R⁴ represents Et and G represents CO₂Et.

44. (Previously presented) A compound according to Claim 41 wherein A represents -CH, R³ represents Et, R⁴ represents Et and G represents CN.

45. (Previously presented) A compound according to Claim 41 wherein A represents -CH, R³ represents Et, R⁴ represents Me and G represents CN.